

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-04 FRB-01

INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7545

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

SUBJECT: NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE

REF: ROME'S 14198

1. REPORTEDLY TEN MILLION -- HALF THE LABOR FORCE --
PARTICIPATED IN YESTERDAY'S FOUR-HOUR NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE.
THE STRIKE WAS CALLED BY THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU)
IN DEFENSE OF EMPLOYMENT AND IN SUPPORT OF LABOR'S DEMANDS
FOR WAGE ESCALATION REFORM. WHILE CROWDS RANGING AS HIGH AS
SOME 30,000 IN TURIN TURNED OUT TO HEAR LABOR SPEAKERS, THE
PARTICIPATION OF MANY IN THE STRIKE WAS SYMBOLIC AT BEST:
WORK STOPPAGES OF TEN MINUTES IN URBAN TRANSPORT AND IN SOME
STORES, AND BRIEF FACTORY ASSEMBLIES.

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2. A MAJOR THEME EMPHASIZED BY SPEAKERS AROUND THE COUNTRY WAS OPPOSITION TO NEW ELECTIONS. CGIL SECRETARY GENERAL LAMA IN LIVORNO SAID NEW ELECTIONS " WOULD ONLY AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION AND CREATE VACUUMS OF POWER WHICH COULD IMPERIL THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM." LUIGI MACARIO, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF CISL SPEAKING IN NAPLES, AND OTHERS ECHOED THIS THEME.

3. ACCORDING TO CGIL SECRETARY SCHEDA, WHO SPOKE IN ROME, ADDITIONAL STRIKES WILL BE DISCUSSED BY THE CCU TOMORROW. HE INDICATED PROBABLE AGREEMENT ON A "PACKAGE" OF EIGHT HOURS OF ARTICULATED, REGIONAL STRIKES BY THE END OF OCTOBER. THE REASON IS TO PLACE PRESSURE ON MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT IN THE MATTER OF WAGE ESCALATION REFORM.

4. THE SECOND MEETING BETWEEN THE CCU AND CONFINDUSTRIA ON WAGE ESCALATION, HELD ON OCTOBER 16, WAS FRUITLESS. FURTHER MEETINGS ARE PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 26-27.

5. COMMENT: LAMA'S OPPOSITION TO EARLY ELECTIONS IS INTERESTING INASMUCH AS IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD GAIN SEATS. THE MOST CREDIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT ELECTIONS, WHICH COULD TEND TO POLARIZE THE COUNTRY, WOULD NOT ADVANCE THE COMMUNISTS' MAIN AIM OF PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT. VOLPE

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